



THE INDEX



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HOMERUN BAKER PARK UPDATE

A contract has been awarded for phase one construction of the Homerun Baker Park. The contract winner is Locust Lane Farms Inc.; a Mitchellville MD based firm. Phase one includes grading, erosion control, seeding, stone parking lots and completion of two ball fields. Planning for phase two is still underway. An additional four acres have been purchased including a house and a small wooded parcel. This will be available for additional facilities. A picnic area, pavilion, volleyball pits, and basketball court are being considered for phase two. Phase one is to be completed this spring. Fundraisers will begin soon to obtain the grant matching funds.

BUDGET HEARING SET



The FY01 Budget for the Town General Fund is being prepared. There will be a public hearing at 7pm on 3 April just before the regular Town meeting. The first proposal keeps the tax rate at .54 cents per 100 dollars. Despite increasing pressure the com-

missioners are determined to keep the rate low as long as possible.

COMMISSIONERS NAMED TO COMMITTEES

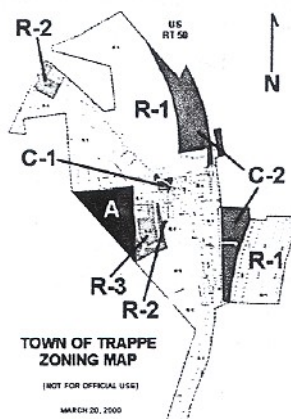
Each Commissioner acts as chairperson on one or more committees. Commissioner Niemeyer has taken the parks and recreation committee. He did a good job getting the Christmas decorations up, there will be more next year. He is also working on the Toddler Park at Harrison Drive. Bob Quidas did an outstanding job as liaison for the Main Street project, continues as chair for infrastructure projects, and serves on the Planning Commission. Dick Darling heads the public safety committee. Don English doubles as Zoning chairperson and Vice President. Edgar Harrison is Commission President

WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE MOVING AHEAD

The Water distribution system upgrade project is nearly ready to be advertised for bid. This project replaces the old or inadequate water mains of the town and introduces meters. The total project, including phase

one (the water tower), will cost nearly 3 million dollars. We have received a grant for just over 1.2 million dollars. In many cases the better water flow will make fire insurance premiums eligible for reduction.

NEW OFFICIAL ZONING MAP ADOPTED, VILLAGE OVERLAY ZONE BEING REWORKED



A final public hearing for the new zoning map was held at 7pm 20 March. This is the official zoning map, not the village overlay zone. There are no changes to zoning on this map but past annexations and changes dictated that a new map be adopted. The Village Overlay zone has been sent back to the planning commission for more work and the firm of Redmond

Johnson has been consulted for professional assistance. It is the intent of the council to make this zone a protection for land values in the old town, not a burden or restriction to the residents. There will be more public hearings before any new overlay zoning is adopted.

SPECIAL TRASH COLLECTION DATE SET

Special trash collection will be Friday April 28th.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP DELAYS WASTE-WATER TREATMENT PLANT CONSTRUCTION

One of the most frustrating projects that this and previous commissions have attempted to deal with is that of the wastewater treatment plant. By the time it is completed, this project will be nearly a decade old. What follows is a brief timeline of the progress, or lack thereof, over the last six years.

In 1993 the discharge from the existing treatment plant had reached the limit set in the Town's permit. The Commission begins searching for a contractor to study and make recommendations. The project got underway in 1994 when the engineering firm of DBF was contracted to conduct a preliminary study. MDE (Maryland Department of the Environment) issued planning limits to the town and DBF completed its study. The recommendation was to construct a BIOLAC plant

using the existing discharge location. The Town Commissioners used most of 1995 looking for options to reduce the cost or to build the project in phases. The Town also entered into a self-imposed building moratorium for new sewer connections.

In 1996 the Town entered into a formal consent agreement with MDE, which set a schedule for compliance, set effluent standards, and included the moratorium new sewer connections. Trappe acquired an MDE grant of \$300,000 for phosphorus removal to bring the phosphorus discharge content down to 0.5 part per million. MDE also agreed to allow the existing subdivisions in the town to build out effectively permitting an additional 50 sewer connections. Trappe then contracted with DBF to design a wastewater treatment plant with cost cutting modifications developed by the commissioners during the previous year.

In 1997 the Town received a RD grant of \$870,000 and \$947,000 in low interest loans. A bond issue was passed and a temporary construction loan obtained. The final engineering design was then completed and submitted to MDE for approval.

In 1998 MDE gave approval to proceed with construction. In September 1998 MDE held a public hearing regarding the Trappe discharge permit renewal. At this hearing the Talbot River Protection Association challenged the proposed permit limits set by MDE. No permit renewal was issued pending further study of water conditions in Trappe Creek. This action put construction on hold.

In July 1999, following its study, MDE issued a draft notice for the Town's review and comment. This notice modified the discharge limits, which had been the basis of design for the new treatment plant. BOD and phosphorus limits were modified with phosphorus being reduced to 3/10 of one part per million parts of water. This level is nearly undetectable by normal testing methods. Trappe applied for additional funding in order to modify the plant design and comply with the new proposed discharge requirements. MDE rejected the request for funding in September 1999.

In October 1999 MDE published its notice of final determination for public comment. Trappe engaged the law firm of Schaller and Gorski LLP to appeal the MDE determination. MDE then requested a meeting to negotiate the appeal. Delegates Ken Schisler and Addie Eckardt assisted the town in subsequent negotiations.

In February 2000 an understanding was reached with MDE. The plant will be modified to comply with the new standards and MDE will support the Town's request for \$285,000 in additional grant funding for the cost. Changes to the design are being made by DBF but the temporary construction loan has expired. The next steps are obtaining MDE approval of the pending design changes, negotiating a new construction loan, then bidding the contract.

EDITORIAL COMMENT By Edgar Harrison, Council President. I agree with the goals of the TRPA (Talbot River Protection Association) and support initiatives to improve water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. I also believe that the TRPA is correct in its assertion that MDE has little scientific foundation for setting discharge permit levels of waste materials. The Democratic administration and Republican Congress actually agreed on legislation to reduce pollution. Congressman Gilchrest is active in implementing TMDLs. (Total Maximum Daily Loads). This is a federal requirement to research and scientifically determine what levels of pollutants and nutrients can be discharged without harming natural bodies of water, in our case the Bay and its tributaries.

This is a very complicated question, subject to many interactive variables. The Town of Trappe and MDE had agreed on an interim permit level, which reduced phosphorus levels by half and cut other pollutants as well. All concerned knew that when TMDLs were developed discharge permits would be adjusted based on scientific research. In their zeal to accomplish something NOW the TRPA targeted the permit limits for Trappe, the smallest municipal treatment plant in Talbot County. This small group of well-intentioned activists has accomplished quite a lot. As a result of their action construction of an improved plant that was to reduce phosphorus by half has been halted. New discharge limits based on the most cursory testing and analysis have been imposed at substantial cost to the residents of Trappe. A moratorium on new sewer connections continues to depress property values and prevent property owners from developing their land. MDE has spent time and money on a superficial steady that was being properly addressed by TMDL legislation. The plan to improve the quality of water incrementally pending the scientific determination of TMDL has been derailed. Limits being imposed are arbitrary and may be excessive.

I have sympathy with the association's impatience and frustration with the apparent slow pace of government action. They no doubt are quite pleased with their accomplishment. Their lack of appreciation for the complexities involved and consequences of precipitate action are unfortunate. To quote Jess Feinman "Everything appears easy to those who don't have to do it"



VISIT TRAPPE ON-LINE

There's more there than we can describe in this small space, so log on and take a look! (be sure to type the "~" before trappe)

www.goeaston.net/~trappe/home.html

The Index is a publication of the Trappe Town Council. We welcome contributions to the calendar of events, and short articles that are of general interest to the community. Events reported in *the Index* do not necessarily reflect the endorsement of the Town Commissioners. The commissioners reserve the right to edit or reject any item submitted.